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North Carolina - Department of Natural Resources and Community Development

LAND USE ELEMENT

CAMDEN COUNTY

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1978

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Camden County, North Carolina

Land Use Element
Comprehensive Planning Assistance Program
1978

Technical Assistance

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Elizabeth City, North Carolina

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1. Introduction

Congress amended the Comprehensive Planning Assistance program, through Title IV of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, to facilitate comprehensive planning for urban and rural development, on a continuing basis, by State and local governments, and to encourage such governments to establish and improve planning on an areawide basis. Extending previous requirements for comprehensive planning assistance, the Congress specified a basic planning system for those States, local governments and areawide organizations which utilize section 701 assistance. Each grantee must have a comprehensive planning process which over time leads to the preparation of a comprehensive plan. This plan must include at least a land use and housing element. Citizens within the grantee's jurisdiction must be involved in the preparation of the comprehensive plan. On a two year cycle, each grantee is to review and update its comprehensive plan and evaluate progress in meeting the planning objectives set for itself. Planning and implementation activities undertaken by the grantee must be coordinated so that the land use and housing elements are (1) internally consistent, (2) coordinated with other functional elements of the comprehensive plan, and (3) consistent with functional and land use plans of other jurisdictions. After August 22, 1977 the Department may make comprehensive planning assistance grants only to those applicants who have completed a land use and housing element.

2. Analysis of Existing Plans, Policies and Regulations

The analysis of existing plans, policies and regulations can be found in the CAMA Land Use Plan, which is available for inspection at the County Courthouse.

3. Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection and analysis pertaining to the physical environment and including such factors as geology, soil types and characteristics, topography, ground water and recharge areas, wetlands, rare and endangered species habitats, unique natural areas and sensitive environmental areas (AEC) were all addressed in the CAMA Land Use Plan.

The man-made environment, such as land use, as well as community facilities, such as water supply, sewerage disposal, transportation, education, recreation and other government facilities and services, were addressed in the CAMA Land Use Plan.

4. Broad Goals and Objectives

In 1976 the Camden County Land Development Plan was approved pursuant to the Coastal Area Management Act of 1974. Included in this plan were several broad goals and objectives for Camden County which were based on citizen input during the planning process. Also, in 1976 the Albemarle Area Resource Conservation and Development Plan was adopted. This plan also included broad goals and objectives which will effect land use in the County.

1. Issue: Future Land Use Development in the County

Citizens of Camden County feel that future development of the county should be orderly. They are also concerned that the rural atmosphere of the county be maintained.

Findings: When adults and high school students were asked about future land development in the county over 90% of the adults answering the question and over 87% of the high school students answering the question felt that future development must be planned. Also, when adults and students were asked about the need for more control on land development 60% of the adults and 50% of the students agreed that there should be more control. 21% of the adults and 36% of the students that answered the question were neutral.

2. Issue: Location of Future Major Development in the County

Future major development taking place in the county should be concentrated in or near existing communities. This would make extension of the South Mills water lines into an area feasible if there is a concentration of development.

Findings; When citizens were asked about location of future growth over 55% of the adults and over 76% of high school students responding to the question felt that future growth should be concentrated in existing communities (Example: South Mills, Camden, Belcross). This concentration of future growth would also help assure the protection of natural resources and wildlife areas which was of major concern to both adults and high school seniors. Specifically, when adults and high school seniors were asked about natural resource protection over 90% of the adults and over 85% of the high school seniors indicated these areas should be protected.

3. Issue: Tourist and Recreational Potential of the Area

Although citizens of the county desire to see the area remain a predominantly rural area they are also concerned with additional employment opportunities. The recreation and tourist potential of the area is seen as one way of protecting the rural atmosphere and at the same time allowing some economic expansion.

Findings: When citizens were asked about development of tourism in the county over 65% of the adults and over 75% of the high school seniors answering the questions felt that the tourist potential of the area should be developed. When recreation was discussed over 79% of the adults and 86% of the high school seniors answering the question felt that more recreational facilities were needed in the county.

4. Issue: Preservation of Historic Landmarks

The county has a large number of significant historic sites and based on citizen desires these sites should be considered for preservation. These structures represent a link with the historic past of the area and should be protected if possible.

Findings: When citizens were asked if they would like to see historic assets preserved over 82% of the adults and 75% of the high school seniors indicated they would like to see historic structures preserved.

5. Issue: Preservation of Agricultural and Timber Land

Agriculture is of great importance to the county's economic base. This important natural resource should be protected from unrestricted or uncontrolled growth.

Findings: The agricultural land of Camden County is some of the most productive land in North Carolina. With the world crop demand increasing each year it is important that prime agricultural land be protected from unnecessary

development. When citizens in the county were asked about protection of agricultural land over 67% of the adults and over 59% of the high school students answering the question felt that protecting agricultural land was very important.

During several meetings the Camden Growth Advisory Board analyzed the results of the planning questionnaires. The results of the tabulated responses were studied and the findings as indicated were drawn up.

Objectives, Policies and Standards

The Camden Growth Advisory Board, after reviewing issues and problems indicated by citizens throughout the county, translated these concerns into recommended Policies and Objectives to be used by the county in directing future growth. These policies and objectives were then recommended to the Planning Board and they reviewed the recommendations and made several changes. The Planning Board then made their recommendations to the County Board of Commissioners. The Commissioners adopted the Policies and Objectives, after reviewing the recommendations at a regular meeting of the Commission.

1. Issue: Future Land Use Development in the County

Citizens of Camden County feel that future development of the county should be orderly. They are also concerned that the rural atmosphere of the county be maintained.

Policy: Future growth should be orderly and the county should restrict large scale development of either housing or mobile homes.

Objective:

A. By use of the zoning ordinance, development with 50 units or more should be concentrated in existing communities.

B. Development of 50 units or more should be required to provide for central sewerage and water facilities.

2. Issue: Location of Future Major Development in the County

Future major development taking place in the county should be concentrated in or near existing communities. This would make extension of the South Mills water lines into an area feasible if there is a concentration of development.

Policy: Small business and light industry should be encouraged to locate in the county, specifically in or adjacent to existing communities.

Objective:

A. The county should prepare a list of properties that are available and suitable for commercial or industrial development.

B. Land that is identified as available and suitable for commercial or industrial development should be tested for percolation and rezoned multi-use if necessary and promoted as a development site.

C. Land zoned for commercial or industrial use would not be taxed as such until it was purchased for that use.

D. A brochure should be prepared to promote sites that meet percolation requirements, zoning requirements, and are available for development.

3. Issue: Tourist and Recreational Potential of the Area

Although citizens of the county desire to see the area remain a predominantly rural area, they are also concerned with additional employment opportunities. The recreation and tourist potential of the area is seen as one way of protecting the rural atmosphere and at the same time allowing some economic expansion.

Policy: The county should develop its vast recreational potential and tourism to expand the economic base.

A. The county should acquire property for public recreational use.

B. A survey should be conducted to determine the feasibility of developing sites in the county for recreational use.

C. A brochure should be developed indicating points of interest in the county such as historic sites and any future recreational facilities including the Dismal Swamp State Park.

4. Issue: Preservation of Historic Landmarks

The county has a large number of significant historic sites and based on citizen desires these sites should be considered for preservation. These structures represent a link with the historic past of the area and should be protected if possible.

Policy: The county should preserve existing historic landmarks.

Objective:

A. The county should determine which structures are of significance to the area and have these structures considered for listing by the North Carolina Historic Commission.

B. Historic structures that are being restored as an historic site should be considered for a reduction in local taxes.

5. Issue: Preservation of Agricultural and Timber Land

Agriculture is of great importance to the county's economic base. This important natural resource should be protected from unrestricted or uncontrolled growth.

Policy: Large portion of the county should be protected for agricultural and timber use.

Objective:

A. If during the 10-year planning period industrial or commercial development takes place, the county should give consideration to reducing prime farm land taxes. This should be only be done if the other land uses can offset the taxes lost from farm land.

Camden County

37-6005-029-007 - Make a soil survey of Dismal Swamp State Park,
Camden County.

Purpose: To provide soils information and interpretations for planning
purposes.
Sponsor: Recreation and Tourism Resource Committee, Albemarle Soil
and Water Conservation District and Division of Parks and
Recreation.
Benefits: To enable appropriate utilization of land resources in
park development
Assistance: Technical and financial.

37-6005-029-011 - Clear and snag Joyce Creek, Camden County.

Purpose: Flood prevention and drainage for cropland and roads.
Sponsor: Land and Water Resource Committee, Albemarle Soil and
Water Conservation District and County Commissioners.
Benefits: Greater yield from cropland, less road maintenance and
improved health.
Assistance: Technical and financial.

37-6005-029-081 - Provide a day care center facility for children, Camden
County.

Purpose: To construct a building, provide necessary equipment
and adequate staff to care for children of working mothers.
Sponsor: Community Facilities and Services Resource Committee,
Department of Social Services and County Commissioners.
Benefits: To allow mothers to enter labor force and leave their
children with qualified attendants, raise the standard of
living.
Assistance: Technical and financial.

37-6005-029-082 - Determine the need for transportation for sick and
needy, Camden County.

Purpose: To provide services for aged, sick, low income residents
of county.
Sponsor: Community Facilities and Services Resource Committee,
Department of Social Services and County Commissioners.
Benefits: Improve health and nutritional conditions through trans
porting aged, sick and low income people to necessary
services, grocery stores, etc.
Assistance: Technical and financial.

37-6005-029-083 - Provide a radio communication system for school bus
service trucks, Camden County.

Purpose: To provide better routine maintenance and emergency
mechanical services.
Sponsor: Community Facilities and Services Resource Committee and
Board of Education.
Benefits: Dispatch assistance directly to disabled bus to get the
children to school.
Assistance: Technical and financial.

37-6005-029-084 - Provide new classrooms and laboratories at high school, Camden County.

Purpose: To provide better educational facilities and advantages to students, teachers and county.
Sponsor: Community Facilities and Services Resource Committee, Board of Education and County Commissioners.
Benefits: Upgraded classrooms and laboratories and better learning environment for students and teachers.
Assistance: Technical and financial.

37-6005-029-085 - Develop a proposal to upgrade communication system, fire department, law enforcement, Camden County.

Purpose: To coordinate communication systems of emergency services.
Sponsor: Community Facilities and Services Resource Committee, Fire Department, Sheriff's Department and Citizens Band Radio Club.
Benefits: Better protection for citizens and property.
Assistance: Technical and financial.

37-6005-029-144 - Develop Dismal Swamp State Park, Camden County

Purpose: To provide recreational and natural area study on existing state property.
Sponsor: Recreation and Tourism Resource Committee and County Commissioners.
Benefits: Tourist attraction for county, area and state.
Assistance: Technical and financial.

37-6005-029-145 - Initiate an accelerated soil survey, Camden County.

Purpose: To provide soils information for planning boards, units of government and individuals making land-use decisions.
Sponsor: Land and Water Resource Committee, Albemarle Soil and Water Conservation District and County Commissioners.
Benefits: To provide basic data for making sound land-use decisions.
Assistance: Technical and financial.

37-6005-998-151 - Conduct a workshop to provide information on hog marketing alternatives, Camden, Currituck and Pasquotank Counties.

Purpose: To let hog producers know how they can maximize their income through marketing.
Sponsor: Agriculture Resource Committee and Agricultural Extension Service.
Benefits: Increased marketing knowledge and more income for area farmers.
Assistance: Organizational and instructional.

37-6005-029-154 - Plan water management program, Dismal Swamp State Park, Camden County.

Purpose: To maintain optimum water table for fragile environment, prevent gradual depletion of ground water.
Sponsor: Fish and Wildlife Resource Committee, Albemarle Soil and Water Conservation District, Division of Parks and Recreation, and County Commissioners.
Benefits: To provide a needed management system to protect this unique, natural area. Plan for greater stabilization of water level in Dismal Swamp Canal and agricultural water resources. Increase aesthetic and recreation value, and maintain water level for canoe access to natural area.
Assistance: Technical and financial.

37-6005-029-155 - Install water control structures, Dismal Swamp State Park, Camden County.

Purpose: To provide an effective water control program that would stop the gradual drainage of the Dismal Swamp.

Sponsor: Fish and Wildlife Resource Committee, Albemarle Soil and Water Conservation District, Division of Parks and Recreation and County Commissioners.

Benefits: Better fire control, preservation of the indigenous plant and animal communities associated with the Dismal Swamp, greater stabilization of agricultural water resources, increase aesthetic and recreation value, and maintain water level for canoe access.

Assistance: Technical and financial.

Annual Objectives

Broad Goals

A. The County should develop its vast recreational potential and tourism to expand the economic base.

Met Objective		Did Not Meet Objective
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(1)	(x)	()
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(2)	()	()
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(3)	()	()
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Note: 1 has been implemented.

1. In 1977, a Recreation and Open Space Plan was prepared for the County.

B. The County should preserve existing historic landmarks.

Met Objective		Did Not Meet Objective
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(1)	()	()
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C. Small business and light industry should be encouraged to locate in the County, specifically in or adjacent to existing communities.

Met Objective		Did Not Meet Objective
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(1)	()	()
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(2)	()	()
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(3)	()	()
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Annual Objectives

(1) A survey will be conducted to determine the feasibility of developing sites in the County for recreational use.

(2) Utilize the Community Schools Program to make recreational opportunities available to citizens, using school sites and facilities.

(3) Select site for recreational development and apply for a Bureau of Outdoor Recreation Grant.

(1) Apply for a historic properties inventory grant.

(1) Secure assistance from ARPDG, Dept. of Natural Resources and Community Development or others in preparing a list of properties that are available and suitable for commercial or industrial development.

(2) Work to attract light industry or commercial establishments to locate in County.

(3) Prepare a brochure to promote sites in the County that are suitable for commercial or industrial development.

D. Promote flood prevention and cropland drainage projects.

(1) Continue to work toward having Joyce Creek cleared for flood control.

Met Objective	Did Not Meet Objective

(1) () ()

5. Evaluation Criteria for Goals and Objectives

To ensure that the broad goals and annual objectives adopted by the Commissioners are being addressed, the Commissioners will make an annual assessment of annual objectives established during the previous year. This assessment will determine if the annual objectives were met or if progress is being made, using the check list provided in the goals and objectives section.

6. Plan for Future Land Use (Land Classification Map)

As part of the Coastal Area Management Planning process, a Land Classification Map was prepared based on analysis of existing land use, population projections and the CAMA guidelines. The map has been developed to serve as the primary tool to direct future growth. The map and text are discussed in detail in the CAMA Land Use Plan.

7. Public Participation

Public participation was a primary concern throughout the planning process, and particularly during the establishment of goals and objectives. For detail information on the public participation process, see the public participation section of the CAMA Land Use Plan.

8. Environmental Assessment

The County Board of Commissioners has the desire to maintain the good quality of life now enjoyed in Camden and proposes no action that would adversely affect the environment. Also, based on the results of the Coastal Area Management Act Land Use Plan, there was a clear desire by citizens of the County to retain the agricultural character of the County with slow growth that is sensitive to the environment. The land use plan also identified physical limitations for future development, fragile areas such as estuarine waters, public trust waters and coastal wetlands and areas with resource potential. All of this information should be helpful in guiding future residential and other development to insure that there will be as little adverse affect on the environment as possible. For detailed information on the natural environment of Camden County, a copy of the CAMA Land Use Plan is available for inspection at the Camden County Courthouse in Camden.

Impact of Proposed Act Outlined in Housing Element

All of the actions discussed in this document are proposed and intended to have a positive impact upon either the natural or man-made environment. Safeguards against unnecessary adverse effects are also called for under the Coastal Area Management Act of 1974, and under state and regional clearinghouse procedures.

9. Historic Preservation Assessment

At the present time there are two structures in Camden County that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. First, Milford Manor or the Thomas Relfe House which is located in Courthouse Township on State Road 1205 approximately 4 miles NW of Camden. This dwelling is similar to dwellings erected by Dutch that settled throughout the area. Thomas Relfe, Dutch extraction, came from New Jersey, obtained a patent for 1,650 acres in the vicinity in 1696. It is therefore probable that he built the house since only those of English descent have owned this place since Relfe's time. Now the residence of Dr. & Mrs. W. K. Wassink. The second structure is the Camden County Courthouse which is also located in Courthouse Township on N.C. 343 at Camden. The building was erected in 1847 and is the second on the site. Other structures with historic significance include:

1. Colonel Dennis Dozier Ferebee House

Location - South Mills, N.C. 343

Significance - Dwelling was erected by Dennis Dozier Ferebee shortly after his marriage to Sarah McPherson, daughter of a very wealthy planter, Willie McPherson. Col. Ferebee was a state political figure both before and after the Civil War. The house has been restored by present owners Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Hobbs.

2. Dismal Swamp Canal and Locks

Location - South Mills on Highway 17

Significance - ANR* - Oldest surviving artificial waterway in the United States. Under the leadership of Virginia Governor Patrick Henry, legislation approving the project for the canal from the Elizabeth River in Virginia to the Pasquotank River in North Carolina. Excavation by slave labor was begun in 1792 and the first vessel (of very light draft) passed through the canal in 1805. Locks were found necessary in order to impound water draining from Lake Drummond so as to provide sufficient water for floating boats. The center of the swamp is higher than the adjacent rivers.

3. McBride Methodist Church

Location - South Mills off N.C. 343 on State Road 1224, 2 miles east

Significance - First house of worship erected on this site was authorized in 1715 under auspices of Episcopal Church. In 1792 Methodist Society was given permission to use sanctuary, provided they help complete a new sanctuary and to keep it in repair. In time, Methodists absorbed the congregation. Currently in use.

4. Nosay or Gorden House

Location - South Mills off N.C. 343 on State Road 1224, 2 miles south
Significance - Residence erected by William Riley Abbott in 1850's.
Shortly afterwards Abbott sold place to Joseph Gordon. Federal troops
used it as a hospital after Battle of Camden in 1862.

5. Battleground, unmarked

Location - South Mill Township, N.C. 343 Burnt Mills
Significance - The Battle of Camden was fought at Sawyers Lane. Southern
troops met and routed Yankee soldiers enroute to destroy the Canal Locks
on the Dismal Swamp Canal. This was the only Civil War Battle on Camden
soil. Woodland and cropland on paved road.

6. Caleb Grandy House

Location - Courthouse Township N.C. 343 at Camden.
Significance - NR - is not known when the house was built, but Caleb Grandy
died here in 1795. Grandy was elected a representative in State Legislature
in 1777 when the county was formed, and succeeded himself twice. A State
Senator in 1793 and 1795; year of his death.

7. Alfred Gatlin House

Location - Courthouse Township, S. R. 1138, 1 mile South of Camden
Significance - This house was built in the decade after 1823, when Alfred
Moore Gatlin, formerly a resident of Edenton, defeated incumbent, Lemuel
Sawyer and a Camden County man, for a seat in the lower house of U.S. Congress.
He was not re-elected and moved to Florida about 1835. He as third man elected
to Congress from Camden County.

8. Chantilly Ancient Ferry

Location - Courthouse Township, S. R. 1138, 2 miles South of Camden on the
Pasquotank River.
Significance - From 1740 to around 1775, Colonel John Solley operated a ferry
from this point to Relfe's point (now Winslow Acres) across the river. It
ceased to operate shortly after Enoch Sawyer obtained a franchise to operate
a ferry across the Pasquotank River where the width is about 200 yards. About
1810, this property was conveyed to a member of the Lamb family, which con-
tinued operation until 1910. It was know as Lamb's Ferry. Rivershore to
Chantilly.

9. Treasure Point

Location - Courthouse Township, S. R. 1130, 4 miles south of Camden on the
Pasquotank River.
Significance - Junction of the 2 branches of Areneuse Creek just before it
enters Pasquotank River, affords a pleasing scene. In 1740, Samuel Saban
Plomer obtained a franchise to operate a ferry from this point to New Begun
Creek across the river. Distance was too greate for effective operation.
Residential development.

10. Fairfield (Isaac Gregory House)

Location - Courthouse Township, S. R. 1121, 3 miles SE of Camden
Significance - Dwelling was the residence of Bri. Gen. Isaac Gregory during the Revolution. A visiting governor transacted official business here. William Biddle Shepard had bought the plantation and was living here when he was first elected to the U. S. Congress in 1830. Shepard was the fourth man to be elected to U.S. Congress from Camden County.

11. Indiantown

Location - Courthouse Township, Junction of S. R. 1107, 1121 and Currituck County.
Significance - A 10,240 acre tract granted by John Granville and other Lord Proprietors to the King and Nation of Yawpin Indians on October 2, 1704. All rights and privileges "except one half of all gold and silver mines." The upland portion of the Indian village is now farmland. The greater portion is swampland.

12. Residence of Dr. S. G. Wright

Location - Courthouse Township, S. R. 1107, 6 miles east of Camden.
Significance - Residence is an excellent example of better type of dwelling erected in area roundabout from the time of the Revolution until after the Civil War. House was repaired and remodeled by Burfoot Family in 1810. Dr. S. G. Wright residence.

13. Shiloh Academy

Location - Shiloh Township, N. C. 343, 8 miles Southeast of Camden.
Significance - Building was erected in 1830 when the highway ran south of the house. Lower floor was used as schoolroom known as "Shiloh Academy," and second floor housed Widow's Son Lodge of the Masonic Order. Noted teacher Ezekiel Gilman was one principal here.

14. Milltown

Location - Shiloh Township, S. R. 113, 6 miles southeast of Camden on Pasquotank River.
Significance - Five windmills once stood on the immediate area, now called Texaco or Elizabeth City Beach. Until recent years, it was understandably known as "Milltown." Riverside residential development.

15. Shiloh Baptist Church

Location - Shiloh Township N.C. 343, 7 miles southeast of Camden.
Significance. This congregation is the "oldest continuing Baptist Congregation in N. C." dating from 1727. The building was used as Federal Arsenal during the occupation of Shiloh during the Civil War.

16. Residence of Mr. and Mrs. W. Grady Stevens

Location - Shiloh southeast of Camden.
Significance - Dwelling, with altered porch, is typical of homes often built in the region roundabout the Revolutionary era. Nearby residence of Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Forehand affords a vivid contrast between "the old and the new." Grady Stevens residence.

17. Tommy's Point

Location - Shiloh, S. R. 1102, 15 miles southeast of Camden on Pasquotank River.

Significance - An exploring party sent by Sir Walter Raleigh's colony on Roanoke Island in 1585 located an Indian Village on this site which the Indians called Pasquenoke. Before erosion, site afforded an excellent view of Albemarle Sound and upper Pasquotank River thereby offering protection from surprise attack. The patrician John Hawkings lived here in very early 1700's. Thomas Wilson became owner in post-revolutionary period and from his time the place has been called Tommy's Point. Residential development.

18. Camden Point

Location - Shiloh Township, S. R. 1100, southeast end of Camden.

Significance - A unique development in the pocosin area between Broad Creek and Albemarle Sound. Area was suggested as a good place naturally affording forage for cattle during winter months by Lord John Carteret in 1666. Site of Camden Island Corporation and Camden Point Shores Land Developments.

19. Pine Bluff Site

Location - Shiloh Township, off N. C. 343, S. R. 1100, North River at Albemarle Sound.

Significance - Undeveloped site, Sheds located here.

*ANR - Historic places that have been approved for listing by the North Carolina Historical Commission in the National Register of Historic Places pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

*NR - Historic places that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is a roster maintained by the National Park Service under provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Properties listed are considered "significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, and culture--a comprehensive index of the significant physical evidences of our national patrimony. Nominations of properties meeting strict criteria are submitted by the director of the Department of Archives and History. Ownership of the properties entered in the National Register is not affected, although their preservation by owners is encouraged as a part of the cultural heritage of the nation.

Sources: 1. SCS Recreational Potential
2. Region "R" Publication
3. Corps Atlas
4. A Lonesome Place Against the Sky, N. C. Department of Archives and History

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